

favorable conditions. It is to be noticed also that reproduction responds to conditions of advance or decline. In decline marriage and family become irksome. Celibacy arises in the mores. In times of advance sex vice and excess reach a degree, as in the Renaissance, which seems to constitute a social paroxysm. The sex passion rises to a frenzy to which everything else is sacrificed. The notion that mores grow either better or worse by virtue of some inherent tendency is to be rejected. Goodness or badness of the mores is always relative only. Their purpose is to serve needs, and their quality is to be defined by the degree to which they do it. We have noticed that there is in them a strain towards consistency, due to the fact that they are more efficient when consistent. They are consistent also in aberration and error when they fall under the dominion of any one of the false tendencies above described. Hence we may have the phenomena of degenerate mores characterizing a period; being a case of change in the mores not due to any external and determinable cause, and analogous either to vice or disease.

105. The correction of aberrations. It is possible to arrest or avert such an aberration in the mores at its beginning or in its early stages. It is, however, very difficult to do so, and it would be very difficult to find a case in which it has been done. Necessarily the effort to do it consists in a prophecy of consequences. Such prophecy does not appeal to any one who does not himself foresee error and harm. Prophets have always fared ill, because their predictions were unwelcome and they were unpopular. The pension system which has grown up in the United States since the civil war has often been criticised. It is an

abuse of extreme
peril in a democracy. Demagogues easily use it
to corrupt the
voters with their own money. It is believed that it
will soon die
out by its own limitations. There is, however,
great doubt of
this. It is more likely to cause other evil
measures, in order that
it may not die out. If we notice the way in
which, in this case,
people let a thing go on in order to avoid trouble,
we may see
how aberrant mores come in and grow strong.
106. Mores of advance or decline. Seeck thinks
that a general
weariness of life in the Greco-Roman world caused
indifference